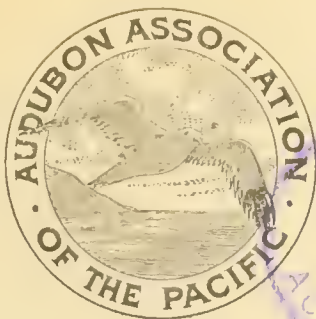


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THE

MONTHLY



GULL

BULLETIN

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SEPTEMBER MEETING: The next regular meeting of the Audubon Association of the Pacific will be held on Thursday evening the 12th inst., at 8 o'clock in the Board Room of the Board of Harbor Commissioners, Ferry Bldg., Second Floor, Room 19.

The speaker for the evening will be Mrs. G. Earle Kelly. Subject, "Birding in the vicinity of Portland, Oregon."

* * *

SEPTEMBER FIELD TRIP will be taken on Sunday, Sept. 15th, to Baumberg Station, on the Alvarado branch, a short distance below Mt. Eden, for the purpose of observing waders, shore birds and the earlier ducks. The lists on the trip run from thirty to thirty-five interesting species, with possibilities of including avocets and stilts.

Take Southern Pacific ferry leaving San Francisco at 7:40 a.m. East Bay members may take train at First St. and Broadway, Oakland, at 8:15 a.m. Purchase round trip ticket to Baumberg, 90c from San Francisco, about 75c from Oakland. Allow ample time to purchase tickets before boarding train. Return train will leave Mt. Eden at 4:20 p.m. Bring lunch and canteens.

The party will leave clubhouse at Baumberg about one-quarter mile west of the station, at 9 a.m. The meeting place (clubhouse) may be reached by automobile via the highway from San Lorenzo to Mt. Eden and Alvarado, turning off toward the bay about three-quarters of a mile below Mt. Eden Four Corners. As the end of the trip is made at Mt. Eden, automobilists are urged to reach Mt. Eden in time to park their cars there and board train for Baumberg at 8:52 a.m. A permit being required to enter upon the property, all members are requested to meet and remain together.

* * *

PROCEEDINGS OF THE AUGUST MEETING

The 151st regular meeting of the Audubon Association of the Pacific was held on August 8, 1929, in the Board Room of the Harbor Commissioners, Ferry Bldg., San Francisco. In the absence of Mr. Harwell, Mr. Brighton C. Cain, Vice-President, presided, with Mrs. Kibbe as Secretary.

After reading and acceptance of the minutes of the June meeting, and a letter of appreciation, dated July 9, from Dr. Grinnell, the meeting became an open forum for discussion and reports of summer observations. Mrs. Kibbe reported having seen a rookery of Caspian terns in the vicinity of San Francisco Bay; Mr. Lockerbie his finding and continued observation and study of six pigeon guillemot nests at Lands End. Mr. Cain spoke at greater length about his trip into the High Sierra country in the vicinity of middle fork of

Tuolumne River. He told of finding goshawks at Upper Yosemite Falls; rough-winged swallows near Le Conte Lodge; pileated woodpeckers near Camp 9; evening grosbeaks, rosy finches, sea gulls (these latter flying about 1500 feet above Ritter Peak); Clark crows, kingbirds, pine grosbeaks; the nests of Townsend solitaire and spotted sandpiper. He also recounted finding near the overhanging rock at Glacier Point a recently killed spotted fawn and also seeing an eagle thereabouts, assuming at first that the bird had killed the fawn, but after investigation the conclusion was reached that the fawn had strayed from its mother, had starved to death and then been found by the eagle.

Dr. D'Evelyn told an old bird legend. Mr. Parry briefly spoke of his observations while on his way East via the southern route, commenting upon the large numbers of mourning doves in the Rio Grande Valley. Miss Cockefair commented upon the non-existence of many birds in the Hawaiian Islands where she spent the summer and Miss Rinehart gave an interesting account of bird life seen by her while in vicinity of Howell Mountain, Napa County.

Miss Kautz was elected to membership.



SOME ECOLOGICAL FACTORS IN THE LIFE OF A QUAIL

(Continued from last month)

That wildcats and Cooper hawks are natural enemies of quail, and that gopher snakes and possibly others destroy their eggs is not news to you. In fact, I am not sure that I can bring you much of anything new about the Valley Quail except perchance in the field of parasitism and disease. But before doing this I wish to refer briefly to the numbers of quail now and to their numbers in former years.

In comparing the abundance of quail now with their numbers in the days of the market hunters, it would seem at first sight that these numbers have been decimated. We read of the thousands and hundreds of thousands of birds that were shot and trapped around the water-holes and sold on the city markets. Changing points of view, legislation and law enforcement have made these conditions a thing of the past. Twenty years ago when the population of the State was one-fourth of what it is now, it is probable that a greater proportion of the men and boys went quail hunting. Sub-division promoters are not so much interested in inducing quail hunters to settle in the State as they are in persuading the incoming golden stream to keep on flowing. If the newcomers were all nature lovers, they wouldn't have idle time on their hands to devote to organizing cults and sects and keeping up the ballyhoo.

If every one who took out a hunting license in California last year went quail hunting every week during the open season and got his limit of thirty birds each week it would have been theoretically possible for them to have shot altogether 38,661,700 quail, provided that there were that many available. Notwithstanding the fact that there are actually more quail hunters now; that roads are better; transportation swifter, and quail country more readily accessible, there are other factors operating to protect the quail. Much of the country is in national parks, refuges, game preserves, and in the hands of private owners who do not permit quail hunting. The average bird lover will be agreeably surprised, I believe, at the overwhelming sentiment among the ranchmen and vineyardists for protecting the quail. They do not shoot the birds themselves and they won't let anyone else do so. Ask a landowner why he wants the quail protected and he will say, "Oh, I don't know, we just kind of like to have them around the place."

Over in the Mt. Diablo area, there is scarcely a ranch or a vineyard that does not harbor a pair or two of nesting quail and coveys of quail in season. The vineyards, orchards and border plantings have provided new shelter for the

birds. Much of the brush and brambles remain on adjacent hillsides as in pre-settlement days. The original water-holes remain in the pasture areas and new sources of water supply have been created about the habitations of man. In fact, it is probable that this whole area supports a larger quail population now than it did in the days when they congregated in enormous numbers around certain water-holes.

Here it seems to me is a good illustration of favorable conditions for quail in a man-made environment. Only one unfavorable circumstance has been called to my attention in the area. Ranchmen have told me that kind-hearted people from the city bring their surplus cats out on the Livermore dirt road, on the other side of Mt. Diablo and turn them loose rather than dispose of them humanely. In my estimation this is an all too common illustration of a man-contaminated environment.

There are a couple of observations of interest that perhaps I should bring to your attention before passing on to another phase of this discussion. These observations may not be new to you but I have not seen them in print. I once shot a quail in a neglected vineyard in the Mt. Diablo area. This quail's crop was packed full of grape seeds. Subsequent examination of the wine grapes in the vineyard revealed that many of the grapes had been punctured exposing the seeds. In my opinion, something else punctured the grapes and then the quail helped themselves to the seeds. The other observation to which I would call your attention is that when the elderberries are ripe I have found quail, day after day, feeding almost exclusively on these berries, both in the trees and on the ground. In fact, the most successful bait I ever used in my quail traps was elderberries.

In "California Game Birds" by Grinnell, Storer and Bryant, are three significant paragraphs, as follows:

1. "There are no records of epidemics occurring among quail in the wild."
2. "Tapeworms are well known but apparently of no serious consequence."
3. "A possible danger to our wild quail comes from the custom of rearing native birds in captivity where they may be brought in contact with foreign species harboring disease germs. In such an event, by liberation of captive birds an epidemic might be started among our wild stock with disastrous results." Page 533.

During the past two years it has been my privilege to have devoted considerable time and thought to this phase of quail ecology. It has taken me a long time to get to this for I desired especially to emphasize the thought that parasitism and disease are only a few of many factors entering into the welfare of the birds. Paragraph two above may be dismissed with a general corroborative statement. As far as my observations go, tapeworms among adult quail are apparently not of much importance. It is possible, though, that heavy infections are a serious factor in the welfare of young birds just as they are in young chicks, and the matter is one that should be investigated.

Regarding item 1 above, an epidemic might readily escape detection by skilled observers. Ordinarily an observer thinks nothing of the disappearance of a covey of quail; he suspects perhaps, that they may have migrated to an adjacent range or may have become scattered with the hunting season or the approach of the mating season.

Large numbers of birds might die in the brush and never be seen. One of the facts of natural history almost bordering on the mysterious is what becomes of the birds that die, for they must die sometime, somewhere. During the past two years, I have had the opportunity to examine several dead quail

(To be continued)

THE GULL

AUGUST FIELD TRIP was taken on Sunday, August 11th, to Tennessee Cove, Marin Co., starting from Manzanita. On the bay a California murre with a half-grown fledgling was observed. On the return trip the birds were seen in the same location.

The day was cloudy but not cold. At the ocean, however, a strong cold wind was blowing.

Four clapper rails were seen on the mud flats opposite the station of Manzanita. Here also a black rail that appeared to have been shot in the head was picked up in the salicornia. According to "Directory to the Bird-life of the San Francisco Bay Region" by Grinnel and Wythe this was an early record, their date being Aug. 23rd. The skin was sent to the Museum of Vertebrate Zoology.

Good views were obtained of Wren-tits and Gnatcatchers. A Cooper hawk was flushed so close that his color and markings were obvious.

On the homeward trip three barn owls were discovered just this side of the cove. They were trying to sleep in a grove of willows. When disturbed made short flights among the trees.

E. BERYL KAUTZ.

* * *

Birds observed were: Western grebe; California brown pelican; Farallon double crested cormorant; black crowned night heron; northern turkey vulture; Cooper, western red-tailed and desert sparrow hawks; coast California quail; California clapper rail; western sandpiper; northern, western and California gulls; California murre; American barn owl; Anna and Allen hummingbirds; western belted kingfisher; Monterey red-shafted flicker; willow downy woodpecker; black phoebe; yellow-bellied western flycatcher; northern violet-green, rough-winged, barn and northern cliff swallows; southern coast Steller and northwestern California jays; western raven; western American crow; Marin chestnut-backed chickadee; California plain titmouse; Pacific coast bush-tit; ruddy wren-tit; western house and Niasio Bewick wrens; Pacific russet-backed thrush; western Mexican bluebird; western blue-gray gnatcatcher; California yellow, Tolmie and golden pileolated warblers; western meadowlark; San Francisco red-winged and California Brewer blackbirds; western tanager; Pacific black-headed grosbeak; English house sparrow; California linnet; northern pine siskin; willow American and green-backed Arkansas goldfinches; San Francisco spotted and brown towhees; Bryant savannah and western lark sparrows; Point Pinos Oregon junco; Nuttall white crowned, Marin and Samuels song sparrows. Sixty species.

Members in attendance were: Mesdames Bracelin, Pittman, Mr. and Mrs. Lockerbie, Mr. and Mrs. Stephens, Misses Cockefair, Kautz, Rinehart, Dr. Card, Messrs. Bryant, Jencks. Guests: Mrs. Burt, Miss Montgomery. Thirteen members, two guests.

C. A. BRYANT.

AUDUBON ASSOCIATION OF THE PACIFIC

FOR THE STUDY AND THE PROTECTION OF BIRDS

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Meets second Thursday of each month at 8:00 p.m., in the Board Room of the State

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Address Bulletin correspondence to the Corresponding Secretary.

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